



MSSSG

Mountain Shadows Support Group

Mountain Shadows
Community Homes

Mountain Shadows
Outreach Services

FALL ♦ 2009

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Mountain Shadows Support Group Hosts Open House

“We were born to unite with our fellow men, and to join in community with the human race.”

— CICERO

The 1st Annual MSSG Open House, held on August 22, 2009, provided an excellent opportunity for residents, local business owners, neighbors, family and friends to meet, get to know one another, and, in a cooperative spirit, enliven and expand our collective bond of community.

“One of the intended purposes for holding the Open House was to provide the businesses, churches, and community organizations that support us a chance to meet the residents and tour the homes while also sharing ‘who they are and what they do’ with all of the visitors and guests for the day,” says Doug Cook, MSSG Open House Chairman. In addition, “One of the joys shared by all of the folks that live in the Mountain Shadows Community Homes is the pleasure they derive from making new friends, actively supporting the North County community, and showing off their homes.” So, at the end of the day, all who attended the event benefitted from the friendly, mutually supportive exchange.

“Yes, our greatness as a nation has depended on individual initiative, on a belief in the free market. But it has also depended on our sense of mutual regard for each other, of mutual responsibility. The idea that everybody has a stake in the country, that we’re all in it together and everybody’s got a shot at opportunity. Americans know this. But we also know that there are some things we can’t do on our own. We know that there are some things we do better together.”

—BARACK OBAMA

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A sense of mutual regard for one another, of mutual responsibility for our community brought together a like-minded group of individuals and businesses to get to know each other and maybe find a way of doing things better and help each other in the process.

Mountain Shadows staffers delivered more than 1,000 fliers to San Marcos and Escondido area residents and businesses to advertise the event. Says Wade Wilde, Executive Director MSSG/MSF, “The goal of the Open House was to foster a relationship with community members. Mountain Shadows Community Homes has over 225 employees, 117 residents and their families who live, work, shop, play and contribute to the quality of life in our North County area. We really want people to get to know who we are and how we can help make a positive impact within our community.

“We invited many of our local business partners, like the Escondido Chamber of Commerce, PetSmart, and Rosemary-Duff Florist, to set-up booths at the event. This allowed them not only to promote their businesses, but to tour our homes and get to know all of us better as well. Many neighborhood residents also stopped by to find out what MSCH is all about.”

“Families from adjacent neighborhoods came by and were very impressed with MSCH,” adds Doug. “One Escondido resident said as she entered the campus, ‘I’ve driven by for 20 years and I didn’t know this was here.’ We want to change that.”

“We are hidden away,” says Linda Cook, Director of Community Relations. “But we really feel like we have so much to offer.” To deepen a connection with their North County roots, residents recently teamed up with the Escondido and San Marcos Kiwanis Clubs to form San Diego’s first Aktion Club, a volunteer organization which encourages a commitment to community ser-

vice among its disabled members.

Adds Doug, “Everybody that gets to know our residents wants to help them, but what they don’t know is that our residents want to help the community.

“We also had several families with loved ones who have developmental disabilities that came to the Open House and they were very excited and happy to find out about Mountain Shadows and what a great resource we are. Several are considering a second look, which would involve bringing their child to visit us.

“Many area businesses and organizations participated by setting up booths at the event. While the final counts aren’t in yet, we expected more than 500 visitors in addition to our 350+ employees and residents to attend. That gave their organizations great exposure.”

Community businesses and organizations that took part in the event included:

The Police Foundation – Explorers

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The Blue Mug
The Escondido Children's Museum
The Escondido Chamber of Commerce
Pacific Western Bank
Bethel Baptist Church
Knights of Columbus
Mission Hills Church
Gateway Church
PetSmart
Our Planet Recycling
Marrs Maddocks Insurance

"Everyone that participated was very happy with the results and said they'd love to come back when we have our next Open House!" adds Doug.

Staffers also manned booths aimed at helping event attendees get to know about Mountain Shadows and what we do. These provided information relating to:

- QMRP and RC responsibilities and opportunities – booth hosted by Arlene Galvan, QMRP



- Human Resources – booth hosted by Toni Albright, Human Resources Director
- Mountain Shadows Special Kids Homes – booth hosted by Shelly Dawson, Placement Coordinator, MSSKH
- Mountain Shadows Outreach Services – booth hosted by Fred Lindahl and Michele Combs
- Aktion Club – booth hosted by Linda Cook, Director of Community Relations and Betty Parker, Kiwanis Lt. Governor
- Mountain Shadows Foundation – booth hosted by Wade Wilde, Executive Director and Fred Lindahl
- MSCH Resident-Self Advocacy – booth hosted by Donna Ponomarenko, Activities Director
- Arts & Crafts – booth hosted by Donna Ponomarenko, Activities Director
- MI California Printing & Advertising – booth hosted by Sandy Paris and her brother Fernando
- Photo booth – hosted by Carol Haskin and Sandy Paris
- Exceptional Mountain Shadows Athletes – booth hosted by Donna Ponomarenko, Activities Director

There is an old African proverb, which originated in the Nigerian Igbo culture, *Ora na azu nwa*. This means it takes a community or village to raise a child. The Igbo's also often name their children, *Nwa ora*, which means *child of the community*.

"America should be a collection of communities where every member has the right to belong. It should be a place where every man feels safe on the streets and in the house of his friends. It should be a place where each individual's dignity and self-respect is strengthened by the respect and affection of his neighbors. It should be a place where each of us can find the satisfaction and warmth which comes from being a member of the community of man. This is what man sought at the dawn of civilization. It is what we seek today."

—LYNDON B. JOHNSON

At Mountain Shadows Community Homes, we believe each and every one of us is a child of the village. It is our hope that by coming together, by knowing one another, by helping one another, we will strengthen our bond within the community of man. That is what we seek today and in the future.

Many thanks to all who helped make our first MSSG Open House a success. We look forward to seeing you all at our next event! ■

Club Promotes Community Aktion Among Disabled



Individuals who live with disabilities often have many talents but few opportunities to cultivate and use them. Too often these special citizens remain isolated and dependent when they could be making valuable contributions to their local communities and to the world around them. More than anything, people living with disabilities want to be treated like everyone else. They want to connect to their community – and to give back. Like everyone else they need a sense of purpose and fulfillment in their lives.

To assist in meeting this need, the Kiwanis Clubs of Escondido and San Marcos recently teamed up to sponsor the launch of San Diego North County's first Aktion Club, an organization whose mission is to foster community service among the disabled. "Aktion Club is really about helping people with disabilities give back to their community through service," says Linda Cook, Aktion Club Coordinator.

On a national level, Kiwanis-sponsored Aktion Clubs encourage members to perform a variety of services for the community. Club members conduct fundraising events and food drives, visit nursing homes, and assist with park beautification, recycling and other environmental projects. Aktion Clubs enable members to participate in the active life of the community and to demonstrate the dignity and value of citizens living with disabilities.

Though established only a few months ago, the new San Diego Club is already moving ahead at full speed. "We currently have 19 members who are very active," says Linda. "We are committed to four, ongoing service projects. First, in coordination with Rady Children's Hospital, our members help in creating

pediatric trauma dolls. The dolls are given to children facing surgery or serious illness to give comfort and help them feel better. Our Club also works in conjunction with Angel's Depot, an organization that provides food to seniors in need. Members fill special 'goodie bags' which are given to the seniors.

"In addition to those projects, our members create backpacks for homeless teens through the Vista Kiwanis 'Stand up for Kids' program. The backpacks are filled with essentials such as bottled water, juice, socks, underwear, granola bars and a first aid kit. Members also help with the San Marcos Kiwanis club 'Treasure Chest Literacy Program' which provides books to underprivileged children.

"Members are so excited about all of these projects – and they have ideas for many more projects they want to work on.

"We are actively seeking new members for our club. Membership is open to any adult in our community living with a disability who wants to become a leader and provide services to others. Every Aktion Club elects its own officers and holds regularly scheduled meetings. Our San Diego Club meets the first and third Tuesday of every month."

"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."

—ANNE FRANK

For more information about the San Diego Aktion Club, please contact Linda Cook, office: 760-743-5490, or cell: 619-302-2826.

By becoming a member now, you can help us change the world. ■

World's Greatest Therapy Dog, Baxter, Visits Aktion Club

"You're in the arms of an angel, may you find some comfort here."

~ SARAH MCLACHLAN

"I didn't know what I'd gotten into when I agreed to visit Mountain Shadows," says Melissa Bussey. That feeling was most likely mutual for Aktion Club members, when Baxter, Melissa's nearly 20-year-old therapy dog, was wheeled into their meeting in his custom designed, candy-apple red, padded wagon. Billed as

the "World's Greatest Therapy Dog," Baxter appeared frail and thin and seemed in need of therapy himself.

"Baxter can no longer walk," says Linda Cook, Aktion Club Coordinator. "Melissa has to carry him or pull him in his wagon."

"Baxter was really struggling the day we visited Mountain Shadows," admits Melissa. "It was a *very* hot day and Baxter had his naturally thick, chow-chow

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Aktion Club Gets an Oscar

Every child deserves an Oscar.

The most widely recognized trophy in the world, the 24-karat gold-plated Oscar statuette has stood on the mantels of the greatest filmmakers in history. Glitz and glamour flourish on the legendary red carpet leading into the Academy Awards. For a selected few Hollywood stars, the coveted Oscar represents the pinnacle of fame, the culmination of a successful career, recognition of a job well done. Only 2,701 Oscars have been awarded since the statue was designed by Cedric Gibbons in 1929.

Every community deserves an Oscar.

While most of us will never win Hollywood's prestigious filmmaking award, we, at Mountain Shadows, do believe that everyone deserves an Oscar – but we believe in an Oscar of a very different kind.

We believe in an Oscar that encourages all to achieve the pinnacle of their abilities.

We believe in an Oscar that promotes in all the culmination of their dreams.

We believe in an Oscar that recognizes in all the right to a life lived fully and well.



Everyone deserves an Oscar.

“Our first grandchild, Dante, was born with Sickle Cell Anemia,” says Oscar Knight. “He first became ill when he was just 6 months old. Dante wasn’t breathing when my daughter brought him to Children’s Hospital that first time. Since then, we’ve made over 70 visits to Children’s Hospital. Most visits required a 10-day to 2-week stay in the hospital for Dante.

“Early on, we, as a family, decided that during these hospital visits, Dante would never wake up to a strange face. A family member or friend was with Dante 24-hours a day every time he was in the hospital. Procedures were frightening and painful for Dante and it was very stressful for everyone. My daughter in particular was very emotional – and as the mother goes, so goes the child. So, most of the time, I would stay with Dante. I think I had a calming effect on him. Eventually, it came to be that if Dante woke up and he didn’t see me, he’d scream, ‘Oscar! Where’s my Oscar?! I want my Oscar!’ That’s when I came to realize that

everyone, every child, should have an Oscar.”

And, on August 4th, 2009, Aktion Club members received theirs.

“My first interaction with the disabled was at Pizza Hut,” says Oscar. “I was a member of the Optimist’s Club and some of the other members were going to a pizza party where there were going to be some disabled children. Some of them thought they might have a problem interacting with the disabled. I went along with them to this pizza party. I had a guitar in the trunk of my car, brought it in and started singing camp songs. There was limited participation in singing along by the children. I finished with the song, “Hey Lottie” where the audience makes up lines and sings

along to the chorus. Again, there was limited participation by the children.

“About a year later, Aktion Club was started. Kiwanis Lt. Governor, Betty Parker, was at a club meeting and asked what the members wanted to do. It blew me away when I heard they said they wanted to see me! They remembered my name – AND they had made up words during the year to sing to the ‘Hey Lottie’ song!

“I had also given them copies of the words to three songs before my visit and when I came to the meeting and started to play the music, you could have knocked me over with a feather. They knew the songs and sang along. They also made song requests. They asked me to sing ‘Old McDonald’ and they knew the words better than I did! I was amazed at the level of interaction with the club members.

“I think I had, as many often do, categorized the disabled by their disabilities, rather than recognizing their abilities.” The Aktion Club is designed to do just that – recognize member abilities to make a significant and meaningful impact on the lives of others in their community and around the world.

Oscar joined the Kiwanis in 1979. As a leader in the organization for the past 30 years, Oscar has always held fast to the Kiwanis Mission: To Serve the Children of the World. He has held positions from Club President, to Lt. Governor of Division 31, to his

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■ BAXTER *(continued from page 4)*

coat on. He was very uncomfortable. He had his cooling jacket on and fans were going in the room, but everyone could see how incapacitated Baxter was.”

Yet, by the end of his short visit, this frail, little dog in his red padded wagon had forged a profound and common bond, bridging the divide between human and animal, and inspiring among all a deepened commitment to the mission of the Aktion Club.

And it all started with a little kiss and a little bit of love.

“The club members adored Baxter,” says Linda. “Since he can’t walk, Melissa carried him around the room to visit with the members. When she brought Baxter over to Brian Stafford, there was an immediate connection between the two. Brian petted him and then Baxter kissed Brian.”

“It was a very touching moment,” adds Melissa. “The joy on Brian’s face – I thought he was going to jump up out of his wheelchair he was so happy!” Afterward, Baxter continued around the room, sometimes sitting on laps, accepting loving pets and pats and kisses from everyone.

Baxter was days away from being euthanized when Melissa rescued him nearly 18 years ago. Today, she knows she rescued an angel whose purpose in life is to comfort others. As a Certified Therapy Dog, Baxter volunteers at San Diego Hospice and Palliative Care where he brings peace to the terminally ill. Over the years, he has helped hundreds of patients ease out of their lives with dignity.

Baxter’s visit with Mountain Shadows Aktion Club



was his first experience in working with the disabled. “It may sound strange,” says Melissa, “but I think the fact that Baxter was struggling was positive. It triggered a deeper connection. The club members said ‘Wow. This little dog is still contributing to the world.’ Baxter can’t talk and has physical disabilities, like them, but he is still giving back. They can too!”

“When Baxter turns twenty, I plan on having a big celebration to honor his service over the years, as well as his endless love. I’m tempting him with this party in hope that he will want to reach that age for me ... for him ... and for all whose lives he has touched and will touch over the remainder of his life. I want him to live forever, because he brings that much joy to my life ... every day ... every moment.

“Not unlike humans, older dogs (not to mention disabled dogs) need a job, a mission. They need a place to go, something to do, or they will sleep more than they will live.”

The Aktion Club mission is to provide adults with disabilities an opportunity to develop initiative and leadership skills which will allow them to serve their community. Our members want to return the benefits, caring and support they have received from others. They have taken on the job of giving back and want to make a contribution to their community and the world!

Aktion Club helps sew the seeds of purpose in members of all abilities. Witnessing Baxter’s love, without boundary or condition, has encouraged these seeds to grow and flourish. ■

■ OSCAR *(continued from page 5)*

most recent position as Governor of the California-Nevada-Hawaii District. He was recognized by the California State Senate, the California Legislature Assembly, and San Diego County Supervisor, Dianne Jacob, for his hands-on leadership in mobilizing the Kiwanis to aid those affected by the devastating 2003, 2005 and 2007 wildfires.

Oscar has been married to his wife, Gladys, for 43 years. Gladys is a Certified Sickle Cell Counselor. They have three daughters, Piper, Tracey and Tuesdae.

Every child, every community, everyone, deserves an Oscar.

In an attempt to create a suitably majestic trophy to

honor outstanding moviemaking achievements, MGM art director, Cedric Gibbons designed a gold-plated statuette of a knight wielding a crusader’s sword, standing upon a reel of film -- a knight called Oscar.

The Oscar we speak of is not of Hollywood fame nor does he wield the sword of the knight as in days gone by. The Oscar we honor sits at a frightened and sick child’s bedside – and changes the world ... one child at a time.

At Aktion Club, we seek to cultivate the spirit of Oscar – compassion, leadership, and service to others – in all of our members, because we need enough Oscars to change the world ... one child, one community, at a time. ■

Crepe Myrtle Residents Enjoy Dixon Lake Retreat

In the beauty of nature lies the spirit of hope.

—UNKNOWN

Nestled in a stand of pines and cottonwoods along the pristine shore of Dixon Lake sits a cabin built on a dream – a dream to allow the disabled to take pleasure in the simple beauty of nature.

While most of us take the ability to go camping, stroll around a lake or walk through the woods for granted, few options to truly explore the bounty of nature exist for those with impaired mobility. To enhance opportunities for the disabled to interact with nature locally, the Escondido Sunrise Rotary Club spearheaded a campaign to build a “Cabin by the Lake” – a 750-square-foot brick cabin, with scenic views of Dixon Lake, crafted for the exclusive use of the disabled.

Climb the mountains and get their good tidings.

Nature’s peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees.

The winds will blow their own freshness into you...

While cares will drop off like autumn leaves.

—JOHN MUIR

Recently, several residents and staff members of Crepe Myrtle House savored the peace and tranquility of nature at Dixon’s Cabin by the Lake. “Everyone really had a great time,” says Felicia Tupolo, QMRP. “We were only there for one night and no one wanted to come back!”

The cabin, open year-round, is designed to be wheelchair accessible. It has a bathroom with a wheel-in shower, a bedroom outfitted with an automatic hospital bed and Invacare Lift, a fully equipped kitchen, and furnished living room and dining areas. “There is also a new pier that is wheelchair accessible,” adds Felicia. “The residents really enjoy sitting quietly on the pier, looking out onto the water. It’s so peaceful. Several residents from Birch House will visit the cabin in the coming weeks too and they love to fish off the pier!”

“Reading about nature is fine, but if a person walks in the woods and listens carefully, he can learn more than what is in books, for they speak with the voice of God.”

—GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER

Besides wheeling gently through the woods, listening to the sounds of nature, residents enjoyed feeding ducks, playing board games, and craft projects. “Resi-

dent Katie T. brought her guitar along and played songs for everyone,” says Felicia. “One of the staff members brought a book of scary stories and the residents loved the stories. We had a delicious potluck too. Staff members all brought their favorite dishes.”

“The best remedy for those who are afraid, lonely or unhappy is to go outside, somewhere where they can be quiet, alone with the heavens, nature and God. Because only then does one feel that all is as it should be and that God wishes to see people happy, amidst the simple beauty of nature.”

—ANNE FRANK

Alone under the heavens, amidst the simple beauty of nature, the residents and staff of Crepe Myrtle House felt the quiet happiness in knowing all was as it should be. We thank the Rotary Club and all who made this Cabin by the Lake a reality so the disabled could share in the spirit of hope ignited by this natural beauty. ■



Youth Music Outreach Group Shares Gift of Music

“Music is the universal language of mankind.

—HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

Christele Rondeau, Music Director of Youth Music Outreach (YMO), agrees. “Music transcends all boundaries – age, race, and social background. At YMO, we teach our students to communicate, through music, with others. We believe music is a gift from God. We encourage our students to think outside themselves and bring joy to others through their gifts. Our mission is to spread God’s word through our music.”

From the looks of joy on the faces of audience members, their mission was accomplished during their recent concert performance at Mountain Shadows Outreach Services (MSOS).

Christele is a flutist, with a Bachelor’s degree in Music Performance from Loyola University. As head of the year round YMO program, she strives to provide quality musical instruction that challenges students to achieve musical excellence while deepening their commitment to serving the Lord. Students from the YMO’s Summer Music Camp performed at MSOS in July.

“The Summer Music Camp is held at Vanguard University,” says Debbie, Camp Mom and mother of Christele. “Our goal is to bring high quality music



to people who wouldn’t otherwise have access to it.” YMO takes its music to places such as retirement homes, military bases, rescue missions, prisons, local churches



and many more. “We want to bring our music to those who can’t come to us and to those others might forget about,” adds Christele.

“Performing at Mountain Shadows was as much a joy for all of us as it was for the audience members,” says Debbie. “To see their joy, to see the life that comes into them from the music – they come alive! It is a privilege for all us to be there and share their joy.”

Says Amy Johnson, QMRP of Olive House, “The Youth Music Outreach concert was a wonderful treat! The music was outstanding and the members of the band were friendly and engaging. The best part was when several of the MSOS clients were given the opportunity to conduct the orchestra. They loved it and did a really great job!”

“It really was wonderful to watch the guest conductors from Mountain Shadows,” adds Christele. “One young man was so excited at the chance to conduct that he could barely hold the baton! To see such excitement in his face from this simple act was such a pleasure.”

“This is the second year that YMO has visited Mountain Shadows Outreach,” says Michele Combs, Assistant Director, MSOS. Forty-five Outreach consumers attended last year’s concert. The highlight of the day was when one of our clients, Connie, requested the song, ‘You are my Sunshine’. The performers got very excited and ran out to their bus and got the sheet music so they could play the song for her. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed it. We are extremely grateful to them for sharing their music with us.”

“Watching our students interact with the audience after the concert was inspiring as well,” says Christele. “They were able to see how their music communicated love to others and the way in which music stimulates the spirit – from an audience member screaming out during an exuberant piece, to the calmness elicited from a slower piece of music.”

“Music gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, charm to life and gaiety to everything.”

—PLATO

It has been said that music is the language of the angels. In the case of Youth Music Outreach, we believe this to be true, for their music touched our hearts and made our spirits soar.

Thank you YMO, for sharing your special gift of music with us. The music in your souls touched us all. ■

Mountain Shadows Announces New Board Members

Mountain Shadows is proud to welcome Dr. Ravindra Rao, David E. Erickson, OTR/L, and Steve Cassidy to its Board of Directors. These dedicated men will complement the exemplary cross section of community and industry leaders who selflessly volunteer their time and are committed to the mission of Mountain Shadows.

Dr. Ravindra Rao

Three principles have guided Dr. Ravindra Rao throughout his life: trust, loyalty and hard work. Trust in himself and others, loyalty to those who have helped him, and working hard, without focusing on any potential rewards received from his labors – these are the standards lived by that have made Dr. Rao a leader in the field of pediatric medicine, as well as a dedicated and loving husband and father.



Dr. Ravindra Rao

As a boy growing up in Bangalore, India, Dr. Rao was encouraged early on by his parents and school administrators to follow his vision and utilize his gifts to pursue a career in medicine. “I never had any other idea than to study medicine when I was growing up,” says Rao. Today, Dr. Rao, a Board Certified Pediatrician, is the Head of the Division of General Pediatrics at Loma Linda University Medical Center (LLUMC), a leading-edge, world-renowned facility, which specializes in providing Whole Person Care to more than a half million patients annually.

As a key member of a multi-disciplinary leadership team, Dr. Rao has been instrumental in setting standards of patient care which culminated in LLUMC being named one of America’s Best Hospitals in 2008 by U.S. News Media Group. LLUMC boasts several of the largest clinical programs in the United States in areas such as neonatal care and outpatient surgery.

With more than 30 years of experience in General Pediatrics under his wing, Dr. Rao has continually strived to expand his knowledge and ability to be of service. Involved in the evaluation and care of children with disabilities since the beginning of his career, he has spearheaded various service organizations

and has launched innovative, new programs aimed at improving care for the disabled.

One such program began more than 20 years ago at Mountain View Child Care Center, which is now known as Totally Kids, Inc. At the time, medical care for children with disabilities was provided only at hospitals. Dr. Rao saw a need and filled it by offering to provide care to the children on-site. This improved quality of care and life for the children and reduced cost of care significantly. He went on to provide on-site care to Special Care Children’s Home (SCCH) in Riverside, CA, which is now known as Mountain Shadows Special Kids Homes (MSSKH). He was the first and has remained the only Pediatrician to care for the children of SCCH and MSSKH since the organization’s inception. Today, thanks to the pioneering efforts of Dr. Rao, the concept of in-home health care for the disabled is an industry standard.

Always endeavoring to enrich his capacity to serve, Dr. Rao then branched out into sub-acute care for high-technology dependent children and, later, launched a new acute rehabilitation hospital for children. He has also provided leadership as a Board Member for many organizations, including the Board of Trustees, Inland Counties Regional Center, Inc. and the Board of Directors at Loma Linda University Health Care, Department of Pediatrics.

In addition to his responsibilities as Head of the Division of General Pediatrics at LLUMC, Dr. Rao holds the position of Medical Director for the Spina Bifida Program and Team Clinic at LLUMC. He is an active member of The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), The American Academy of Cerebral Palsy & Developmental Medicine (AACPD), and the Spina Bifida Association of America and California, and other national and international professional organizations.

Dr. Rao was recently honored with the Loma Linda University Annual Good Samaritan Whole Person Care Award, a distinction voted upon by his peers. He received the Global Service Award in 2007 for exceptional service.

Many years ago, as a first year resident at LLUMC, the Chair of the General Pediatrics Division stopped a young Dr. Rao, or Ravi, as they called him, in the hallway and said, “Ravi, I want to let you know, I see

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the perfect resident in you. When I look at you I see hope. I see you working hard and doing well.” Those few and simple words made a life-long impact on a young Dr. Rao which he has always tried to emulate. “I always try to be positive, to encourage others and to give hope. I will bring this vision, this hope, to the Mountain Shadows Board of Directors.”

Deeply committed to family, Dr. Rao has been married to his wife, Gayathri, for more than 30 years. They have two children, Rekah and Rajiv. “Without my family, I could not be doing all of this,” says Rao.

We welcome Dr. Ravindra Rao to the Mountain Shadows Board of Directors and will work hard along side him to advance our shared vision of hope for the future of our residents.

David E. Erickson OTR/L

David E. Erickson’s life path changed during a lunch break between classes at Loma Linda University. “Students from the Occupational Therapy Department were giving a presentation. They invited me in. I followed them, listened, and came out of that meeting knowing I wanted to become an Occupational Therapist.

“Occupational Therapy, to me, is the perfect mix of psychology and medicine. Today, many medical practitioners no longer really see the whole patient. In Occupational Therapy, the occupation of life, all facets of life, is the basis of the profession.”

As a faculty member at the renowned Loma Linda University School of Medicine (LLUSM), Department of Pediatric NeuroScience, David’s passion for whole person care jells perfectly with the university’s mission – to make man whole. He incorporates this philosophy as he manages a caseload of 800 pediatric patients at LLUSM’s Muscular Dystrophy Clinic.

“Many people ask me how I can work with this patient population and not get depressed or sad. To me it isn’t sad at all. To me it’s all about living. I focus on the positive and look to help my patients achieve the best quality of life possible. I think this feeling comes through when I work with patients. Though treatment for Muscular Dystrophy is a long and arduous process, family members often tell me it is enjoyable to come to our clinic. I think that’s because I look



David Erickson

at the upside – life!”

David is currently the consulting Occupational Therapist at Mountain Shadows Community Homes. Whenever he walks across campus, wheelchairs flock to him. “I usually have a trail of followers when I’m at Mountain Shadows. I think this is because I like to come to the homes when life is happening. Many consultants don’t get involved and really have no idea what goes on in the houses. I want to see how my clients really live. I hope to bring this real perspective – this kind of view from the trenches so to speak – to the Board of Mountain Shadows.”

While many would consider David’s unwavering commitment to his patients as going above and beyond the call of duty, he sees it as just doing his job. “Going above and beyond is a job requirement,” he says. His work ethic was influenced by an Orthopedic Surgeon, Dr. James Shook, who taught classes when David was still a student. “Dr. Shook wore Boy Scout pants, rubber shoes, and drove a Subaru wagon every day. I never would have thought he was a surgeon. He never made you feel like he was better than you. He would always say, ‘I’m nothing special. I just take care of patients. I’m only doing what I was born to do. Surgeon is just the label.’ He had a larger view of the whole patient. I try hard to emulate him in my practice and all that I do.”

In addition to his work at LLUSM and MSCH, David is a consulting Occupational Therapist at Angel View Crippled Children’s Foundation. Angel View operates 18 six-bed residential homes (ICF-DD/H and CHLF licensed) serving more than 100 children and young adults in locations throughout California’s Coachella Valley and high desert. He also consults at several other organizations, including Christopher Ranch, an ICF-DD/H facility, JonBec Adult Day Health Care, and Colours ‘n Motion, where he provides clinical support for Wheelchair sales.

Prior to this, David acted as Chief Supervising Therapist for California Children’s Services (CCS), where he administered the CCS program to a caseload of 4,000-5,000 pediatric patients. In this position, he managed a staff of 40 OT/PT professionals in 10 locations throughout San Bernardino County.

In 1999, David was selected as one of ten “Community Heroes” by the San Bernardino County Newspaper for making a positive difference in the community. He was also recognized for clinical excellence by the Occupational Therapy Association of California.

As the founding Board Member, David also spear-

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■ BOARD *(continued from page 9)*

headed the successful launch of the Valley of the Falls Community Center, Inc., which now acts as a vital hub for all community activities and events. He was a paid-call firefighter for the San Bernardino County Fire Department for most of the 1990's, where he proudly served during the Malibu fire and the Northridge quake incidents. He continues his work with the Fire Department as the coordinator of the Fire Auxiliary, which promotes local fund-raising efforts.

David was awarded a Bachelor's Degree in Occupational Therapy from Loma Linda University, School of Allied Health Professions, Department of Occupational Therapy. He is registered with the National Certification Board for Occupational Therapists and holds a current license with the California Board of Occupational Therapy.

David resides in a little mountain hamlet known as Forest Falls in the San Gorgonio Wilderness area of the San Bernardino Mountains. "I love the mountains," he says. "Whatever my day brings, whatever crisis lies down the hill, the mountains are my sanctuary."

We welcome David E. Erickson, OTR/L, to the Board of Directors and look forward to working toward our common goal of making a positive difference in the Mountain Shadows Community.

Steve Cassidy

During his tenure at Xerox Corporation, the \$17 billion world leader in document management services and technology, Steve Cassidy was inspired by the company's client-focused, employee-centered core values and its commitment to innovation and adaptability in a constantly changing global marketplace.



Steve Cassidy

While at Xerox, Mr. Cassidy held various positions, including Major Accounts Sales Manager. In this position, he achieved membership in the prestigious President's Club, Xerox's top performance award, for four consecutive years.

His more than 20 years of management experience at Xerox and other small and large corporations has earned him a reputation as a results-driven, creative problem-solver. He is a strong advocate of fiscal responsibility and adheres to a management philosophy that nurtures a culture of openness and inclusion. He has successfully led multi-disciplinary teams

responsible for the launch of cutting-edge technology for companies including General Atomics.

As the corporate liaison for the Xerox Foundation's United Way Program, Mr. Cassidy spearheaded the development of new partnership opportunities, which increased employee participation by more than 50% and generated thousands of dollars in additional donations to charity each year.

When he retired from Xerox, Mr. Cassidy remained committed to continuing to promote the Xerox belief that everyone must be an active participant in society – that each individual must give something back to the world. He shares our Mountain Shadows Foundation philosophy and looks forward to promoting our vision throughout our community. ■

Cool Activities Help Residents Beat the Summer Heat

Residents participated in a flurry of cool activities aimed at chilling down the hot days of summer. Frosty fun included swimming, creating (and consuming) delicious ice cream floats, baking (and consuming) cupcakes frosted with yummy icing, sand-painting on a breezy beach, and many more refreshing experiences.

Several residents also breezed through the Festival of Sports in Mira Mesa. "Keisha E. and Sally D. from Orange House, Gary w. from Lemon, and Diane Z. from Crepe Myrtle, played bocce ball, floor hockey, and bowled in this event for exceptional athletes," says Donna Ponomarenko, Activities Director. "It was a fantastic event and everyone had a blast!" ■ *(See more pictures on next page.)*



Keeping Cool



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San Marcos., CA 92069

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